
The Dark Crystal

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Summary

Hannah Arendt presented her understanding of totalitarianism in the book *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, but she realized that the word origin does not really fit into her narrative and started talking about the elements of totalitarianism; the elements which crystallized into totalitarian regimes.

Unfortunately that does not solve the problem because Nazism and Stalinism do not share a set of elements. The author presents and discusses the logic of Arendt's narrative which wants to connect two disparate processes - the birth of Nazism and the birth of Stalinism. He shows how Arendt tried to solve the problem by using two methodologically different and irreconcilable understandings of totalitarianism.

In this essay I will discuss Hannah Arendt's understanding of totalitarianism. The book in which Arendt presented her concept is called *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, but as she admits in her *Reply to Eric Voghelin's Review*, "The book ...does not really deal with the 'origins' of totalitarianism - as its title unfortunately claims - but gives a historical account of the elements which crystallized into totalitarianism." In the same text Arendt gives us rather important advice on how to read her book: "The elementary structure of totalitarianism is the hidden structure of the book, while its more apparent unity is provided by certain fundamental concepts which run like red threads through the whole." This means that the apparent structure of the book (Antisemitism - Imperialism - Totalitarianism) does not automatically reveal the elementary structure of totalitarianism. However, the only way to find out what the hidden structure is, is to follow the logic of the apparent structure, to read Arendt's book from the beginning, and to try to understand the logic of her narrative. The book I will write about is not the first editions of *The Origins*, but the edition from 1966, the one ending with Arendt's discussion of the relationship between ideology and terror. I believe that the last chapter of the book destroys the logic of Arendt's narrative and introduces a new and different understanding of totalitarianism. That is why my essay consists of two parts:

A - follows and presents the apparent structure of the book;

B - compares Arendt's and Marcuse's understanding of the relationship between Stalinism and Marx's thought.

I would like to show that (Arendt after 1966) has two methodologically different concepts of totalitarianism.

A

The first part of *The Origins* is called Antisemitism. It consists of four chapters. The first one prepares the discussion and shows the way in which Arendt would like to think about the relationship between antisemitism and totalitarianism. She wants to explain how the “unimportant Jewish problem” had “the dubious honor of setting the whole infernal machine in motion.”¹ Neither antisemitism nor Jewish problem can be understood as origins if by origin we mean a source or a cause from which a thing (a phenomenon) begins its existence. When Arendt writes about antisemitism she does not search for the causes of totalitarianism but instead tries to understand how a relatively “unimportant problem” becomes essential in a certain political and historical situation. The history of totalitarianism is the history of overlapping stories. One of them is about European Jews.

The second chapter presents the position of the Jews in the pre-nation and nation-state, and discusses a few different forms of antisemitism. In the third chapter the Jewish problem is analyzed in the context of society. It is not always clear what Arendt means by society (because she uses the same word for a number of disparate things) but her distinctions between vice and crime and between pariah and parvenu bring to light a set of problems which were not solved in post-Enlightenment European countries. One of them is the identification of emancipation and assimilation in which the Jews are reduced to abstract human beings and encouraged to be “men in the street and the Jews at home.”

Arendt understands the Jewish question as a part of a larger problem of “degeneration” of the citizen into the bourgeois which culminated in the Dreyfus Affair.

The fourth chapter tries to explain the consequences of the Dreyfus Affair. One of the most interesting things is the appearance of the mob. Arendt points out that the mob should clearly be distinguished from the people: like the people it consists of all strata of society, but unlike the people it is not interested in a true representation - it wants a “strong man”, or a “great leader.” The mob exists beyond the institutions of the nation-state and it is not represented in a parliament. The Dreyfus Affair showed the inability of the bourgeois parties to represent the true feelings of the electorate. After the affair it became obvious that the bourgeois understanding of politics in which economic interests were actual origins of

¹Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, A Harvest Book, New York, 1979, p. 3.

political activity, can have fatal consequences, because the mob was not a part of the bourgeois game. The nation-state was not designed to deal with the mob.

The first part of the book (Antisemitism) pointed out a few difficult problems; the structure of the nation-state and the position of the Jews within the nation-state were constantly analyzed by Arendt. In the second part of the book (Imperialism) the decline of the nation-state is presented through a discussion of the relationship between the state and the bourgeoisie. Imperialism should be understood in the light of that discussion.

Hannah Arendt believes that the political emancipation of the bourgeoisie happened with the appearance of imperialism. The nation-state, which was originally not the bourgeois state, became the bourgeois state in order to allow for the process of imperialist expansion. "Imperialism was born when the ruling class in capitalist production came up against national limitations to its economic expansion. The bourgeoisie turned to politics out of economic necessity; for it did not want to give up the capitalist system whose inherent law is constant economic growth, it had to impose this law upon its home governments and to proclaim expansion to be an ultimate goal of foreign policy."²

Imperialists are capitalists who desire power as a means for appropriating wealth. Imperialist politics becomes international power politics and consequently the most important function of the nation-state becomes the accumulation and expansion of power. The state functions in the interest of the society - the citizen is swallowed by the bourgeois, and politics is sucked into economics. "If man is actually driven by nothing but his individual interest, desire for power must be the fundamental passion of man."³

The next fundamental element of totalitarianism is racism. Arendt understands racism in the historical context of imperialism. For her racism is a bridge between nationalism and imperialism. She believes that imperialists were trying to show that they were above and beyond political parties and that is why they became "parasites upon patriotism." Race-thinking which was just a doctrine in the eighteenth century was used as a foundation for imperialistic ideology in the nineteenth century. The doctrine was turned into a political weapon of economic expansion. Race thinking was useful because it destroys the idea of mankind, and functions perfectly as an excuse for international crimes committed by imperialists.

After racism Arendt discusses the pan-movements. They also play a large role in her narrative. The chapter is called *Continental Imperialism: the Pan-Movements*. A few important political phenomena are analyzed in

²Arendt, op.cit., p.126.

³Arendt, op.cit., p.139.

the chapter. Tribal nationalism is one of them. By tribal nationalism Arendt understands a specific form of nationalism which is based on the “atmosphere of rootlessness”. It should be distinguished from ordinary nationalism which is “the expression of this perversion of the state into an instrument of the nation and the identification of the citizen with the member of the nation.”⁴ The absence of the nation state causes the atmosphere of rootlessness. This kind of atmosphere was strongly present in Austria-Hungary and Czarist Russia, and it was the source of “tribal consciousness”. Tribal consciousness appears when members of stateless peoples, who are as peoples ‘homeless’, feel at home wherever other members of their ‘tribe’ live.

Pan-movements are also based on tribal consciousness but their goal is not a national emancipation; they want to create a new type of national empire, and that is why Arendt believes that the pan-movements were a form of imperialism. One of the most important things (in the context of *The Origins*) is the fact that antisemitism played a large role in the formation of tribal consciousness. Georg von Schoenerer, the godfather of Pan-Germanism, understood antisemitism as an instrument for forcing the direction of foreign policy. The pan-movements were functioning beyond the formal borders of European nation-states and their idea was to change borders and establish natural political units. One of the ways to create a necessary sentiment of belonging was to foster the collective hatred of the Jews. Like English and French imperialists, who were above political parties and who identified their business interests with a national interest, the pan-movements attacked the party system and tried to identify themselves with the people. Imperialists were “above the parties”, the pan-movements “above the state”. In both cases European party system was put in question.

In Arendt’s understanding of totalitarianism the fact that the movements were above the state is very important. I will discuss her understanding of the totalitarian movement below.

The last chapter of the second part of the book (*The Decline of the Nation - State and The End of the Rights of Man*) describes the beginning of the end of “the very structure of European civilization”. Arendt writes about the role of hatred in politics, the liquidation of Dual Monarchy and the Czarist empire, and about unsolved national disorder, all of which clearly illustrate the emptiness of the post-Enlightenment ideological promises.

The World Wars created the problem of the stateless people, the problem which helps one to see that the basis of European political civilization is the trinity of state-nation-territory. The rights of men are respected only within the framework of a nation-state which consequently

⁴Arendt, op.cit., p.231.

means that the rights of men do not belong to men as men, but to citizens of nation-states. The right to have rights presupposes a place in the world, a framework which makes one's opinions significant and respected. The inalienable rights of man are actually unenforceable and the loss of polity automatically means the loss of humanity.

Totalitarianism was almost invented to put some order into European political confusion.

So far I have been following Arendt's way of presenting the elements which crystallized into totalitarianism. The elements were antisemitism, the appearance of the mob, imperialism, racism, and the pan-movements. The fundamental concept which provided the unity of Arendt's theoretical operation was the nation-state. In the next part of my essay I will follow the same approach; I will present Arendt's understanding of totalitarianism in three steps. The part of the book called *Totalitarianism* has four chapters, but the last chapter was written a few years later and I believe it should be discussed separately.

Arendt starts her discussion of totalitarianism with an analysis of a classless society.

How did something like a classless society come into being? The classless society is a result of the breakdown of the class system, the system on which the European nation-states were based. The breakdown of the class system automatically means the breakdown of the party system. The party system expresses the plurality of economic interests presenting them in the political sphere. It shows that politics in the nation-state is derived from the economy. Different groups can recognize and formulate their private interests and then try to put them forward politically, but what happens when individuals are not able to formulate their interests, or when political parties are not recognized as representatives of private interests? Then we can not talk about a class society any more, we have to deal with a mass society. The nation-state as a form of government can not 'accommodate' masses.

When she was writing about the Dreyfus Affair Arendt presented the mob as an interesting problem, interesting because the mob was existing and operating beyond the institutions of the nation-state. With the appearance of the masses the nation-state has, formally speaking, the same problem, but this time the masses comprise the majority of the population, which means that the nation-state can no longer function. The major crisis of capitalism which shook European political civilization after WW1 made any kind of bourgeois politics impossible, because politics was an expression of economy and economy was in a mess. The bourgeoisie, whose apathy and hostility toward public life destroyed genuine politics, simply asked for trouble. Adolf Hitler freed the masses from the modern "chaos of opinions"; he showed the way out of neurotic social situation in which atomized individuals did not know who they were, what they wanted and

why their lives were so miserable. The masses were not suitable for the party system, but they were perfect for the movement. Totalitarianism offered a solution to the deep crisis.

“Simply to brand as outbursts of nihilism this violent dissatisfaction with the prewar age and subsequent attempts at restoring it (from Nietzsche and Sorel to Pareto, from Rimbaud and T.H. Lawrence to Junger, Brecht and Malreaux, from Bakunin and Nechayev to Alexander Blok) is to overlook how justified disgust can be in a society wholly permeated with the ideological outlook and moral standards of the bourgeoisie.”⁵ Arendt was appalled by the pre-totalitarian European society.

The next step in her analysis of totalitarianism is the totalitarian movement. Arendt begins her discussion with totalitarian propaganda. Propaganda is important because it sucks the masses into the movement. It is a way in which totalitarian ideology becomes known to the masses. For Arendt ideology is a doctrine used as a political weapon, a doctrine which claims to possess “the key to history” and the solution to all “riddles of the universe.” Ideology which sounds like a scientific prophecy and which is able to give answers to all questions is a perfect solution for the confusion of atomized individuals who do not know anything about anything. Totalitarian propaganda can insult common sense, writes Arendt, only when common sense has lost its validity. Totalitarian propaganda did not have to prepare its audience, the job was done during the period of imperialism and through the decline of the nation-state.

Now I would like to stress a point made by Arendt. She recognizes a relatively big difference in the prehistory of Nazism and Bolshevism. “That totalitarian movements depend less on the structurelessness of a mass society than on the specific conditions of an atomized and individualized mass, can best be seen in a comparison of Nazism and Bolshevism which began in their respective countries under very different circumstances. To change Lenin’s revolutionary dictatorship into full totalitarian rule, Stalin had first to create artificially that atomized society which had been prepared for the Nazis in Germany by historical circumstances.”⁶ The ideal soil and the perfect environment for the totalitarian movement is the bourgeois-type atomized mass. Without it, it is difficult to talk about the movement, and that is why Lenin’s party was not a totalitarian movement. I will return to this point later, because it tells us a lot about the hidden structure of the book.

Totalitarian organization is another extremely important element of Arendt’s story about the totalitarian movement. It is also her first attempt to seriously compare Nazism and Stalinism. The easiest way to compare Nazism and Stalinism is to compare the roles of Hitler and Stalin within

⁵Arendt, *op.cit.*, p.328.

⁶Arendt, *op.cit.*, p.318.

their movements. That is how Arendt starts. The totalitarian movement has a specific onion-like structure in which each layer comprises the front of the next more militant formation. In the center of the movement is the leader. He has to act as a “magic defense” of the movement and to function as a bridge which connects the movement with the rest of the world. He must be a part of the masses and the great leader at the same time. Both Hitler and Stalin had to fulfill the same function and they did so with help from the conspiratory sector. The conspiratory sector represents leader’s inner circle. That is where the power is. “Nazism and Bolshevism arrived at the same organizational result from very different historical beginnings. The Nazis started with the fiction of a conspiracy and modeled themselves, more or less consciously, after the example of the secret society of the Elders of Zion, whereas the Bolsheviks came from a revolutionary party, whose aim was one-party dictatorship, passed through a stage in which the party was ‘entirely apart and above everything’ to the moment when the Politburo of the party was ‘entirely and above everything’; finally Stalin imposed upon this party structure the rigid totalitarian rules of the conspiratory sector and only then discovered the need for a central fiction to maintain the iron discipline of a secret society under the conditions of a mass organization.”⁷ This is a very important point. The essential difference between Lenin’s party and Stalin’s movement was the role of the conspiratory sector. When the balance of the forces changed and when the conspirators became the most powerful element of the one-party dictatorship, the totalitarianism in the Soviet Union was born. The one-party dictatorship became a totalitarian regime. The connection between the leader and the conspiratory sector is the most important factor of totalitarian organization.

Hannah Arendt continues her discussion in the next chapter (*Totalitarianism in Power*) in which she finally tries to show that Nazism and Stalinism are essentially the same.

What happens when the totalitarian movement seizes power in one country? How does the movement understand the system of existing political institutions? Arendt makes a strong point - the movement does not have to change institutions, it can use them as a transmission of power and create a parallel system of power. The movement duplicates offices and does not want to achieve a fusion of the state and the party but to keep the power unchecked. Real power begins where secrecy begins. The Nazis did not have to abolish the Weimar constitution, and they left the civil services intact. They formed a regime which is strictly speaking not a government but a movement in power. Arendt understands that totalitarianism can not be analyzed like any other form of government it is “shapeless” and structureless. In fact it has two structures, the elements of pre-totalitarian political system, and the onion-like structure of the move-

⁷Arendt, op.cit., p.378.

ment. This is why Arendt does not know how to define totalitarianism. She talks about “totalitarian regime” (p.379), “totalitarian system” (p.384), “totalitarian government” (p.395), “totalitarianism as a form of government and movement” (Reply to Voegelin p.373) and a “form of political oppression” (p.460). Arendt clearly sees two things: first, that totalitarianism as a new political phenomenon can not be described with pre-totalitarian categories of political theory; second, that the right way to show that Nazism and Stalinism are essentially the same is not to compare their political (and economic) structures. One can not compare the shape of shapeless things, but one can compare totalitarian actions, and consequences of these actions. This is exactly what Arendt does. She does not try to prove that Hitler’s Germany and Stalin’s Soviet Union have the same type of political system, but she wants to show that Gulag and Aushwitz are essentially the same. That consequently means that the concentration and extermination camps should be understood as the central institution of the totalitarian regime. In the camps totalitarianism shows what it is actually about. It is an attempt to destroy individuality, plurality and spontaneity of human beings, it is an attempt to destroy the human nature.

The camps are the space in which everything is possible. Arendt even identifies totalitarianism with total domination in her *Preface to Part Three* where she says: “There existed an obvious alternative to Stalin’s seizure of power and transformation of the one-party dictatorship into total domination...”⁸ The fundamental difference between Lenin’s and Stalin’s Soviet Union is the presence of terror. Pure totalitarian terror is exercised in the concentration camps. “But if in Germany the really totalitarian type of concentration camps with its enormous majority of completely “innocent” inmates was not established until 1938, in Russia it goes back to the early thirties, since up to 1930 the majority of the concentration camp population still consisted of criminals, counterrevolutionaries and ‘politicals’...”⁹ Before 1930, and 1938 Soviet Union and Germany were, strictly speaking not totalitarian. Finally, how shall we describe and understand the horror of Aushwitz and Gulag? The only way to understand and articulate the unspeakable horror of the camps is to show that they allowed for the presence of “radical evil”. “The radical evil” came into being, “some radical evil previously unknown to us” (p.443). “The totalitarian hell” is the real Hell on Earth. In the Gaus interview Arendt says “It was as if an abyss had opened” and in *Reply to Voegelin* she writes: “When I used the image of Hell, i did not mean this allegorically but literally.” Evil is what totalitarianism is about, evil “previously unknown to us”.

This is the end of the story. The book should have ended with the chapter on total domination. The chapter *Ideology and Terror a Novel*

⁸Arendt, op.cit., p. xxxi.

⁹Arendt, op.cit., p. 450.

Form of Government (written a few years later) does not belong here, it is a part of another story.

In *Reply to Voegelin* Arendt said that the elementary structure of totalitarianism was the hidden structure of the book. The apparent structure of the book functions, formally speaking, like the structure of Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*. A reader of Arendt's book goes through the jungle of European history, and Arendt tries to explain different elements which in a specific historical situation crystallized into a dark crystal - totalitarianism. What happened to Mr Kurtz individually, happened to the entire European political civilization in the moment when totalitarianism was born. Just as Kurtz found the darkness of his own soul, totalitarianism revealed the darkness of Europe. It tried to solve problems which were created before its appearance. The apparent structure has an obvious problem. Czarist Russia was, strictly speaking, not a part of European political civilization. Stalin had to produce the masses of atomized individuals in order to create a totalitarian movement. The book is called *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, but Nazi type of totalitarianism and Stalinism do not share a set of origins. If we change the word origin into element the problem is not solved, because Nazism and Stalinism do not share any elements either.¹⁰ That shows us the hidden structure of the book. The book is about the elements of Nazism and the presence of radical evil. Arendt found out that Nazism and Stalinism are essentially the same by comparing crimes of two regimes. She did not compare their formal political structures because according to her analysis of the totalitarian movement the formal political structure was not relevant. It is not important how regimes formally look like but; it is important what they do. The hidden structure of the book reveals the structurelessness of totalitarianism.

B

Now I would like to compare Arendt's ideas from the last chapter with the rest of the book and with Marcuse's understanding of Soviet Marxism. I decided to compare Arendt's and Marcuse's solutions because I believe that that comparison can help us to understand Arendt's theoretical problems. In the last chapter of *The Origins* she wants to answer the question: Is there a common origin of totalitarianism? The rest of the book says that the common origin does not exist, but the last chapter is different. The answer to the question is - Yes, ideology is the common origin. How did Arendt find this answer? She changed the methodological approach. If we want to find the origins of totalitarianism through the historical approach we will find out that Russian history did not secure elements

¹⁰Seyla Benhabib pointed out the same problem in her essay "Hannah Arendt and Redemptive Power of Narrative" published in *Hannah Arendt - Critical Essays*, edited by Hinchman & Hinchman, State University of New York Press, 1994.

which could have crystallized into Stalinism, because Stalinism is crystallization of Leninism. That is why Arendt looked for the origins of Stalinism in Marx's philosophy, not in Russian history. Methodologically this is a geneology of ideology.

The notion of ideology plays an important role before the last chapter, and it is usually connected with the notion of terror, but it is never the central notion. The logic of Arendt's argument in which total domination is almost identified with totalitarianism, makes terror the focus of her discussion. The non-utilitarian character of total domination, and the non-utilitarian exercising of terror are radically evil. That is the way to destroy human nature and the destruction itself. Terror is not just an instrument of the system, terror is *telos* of the system, whether Nazis and Stalinists know that or not. They can think that the camps are just an instrument of totalitarian rule and that everything is justified in order to fulfill their historical role, but what they actually do is destroy human nature. Ideology is consequently an instrument of terror. It creates a phantom world of fiction, a world in which terror can rule. Arendt does not try to present the self-understanding of Nazis and Stalinists, but to show what actually happened.

In the last chapter the emphasis is changed. Terror is still the essence of totalitarian domination, but it is also "the realization of the law of movement" and "the execution of the law of movement". What is new? Arendt now takes seriously the content of totalitarian ideology, and respects the self-understanding of totalitarians. They thought that terror was an instrument, a weapon necessary to actualize the law of movement which is the law of history. Why did this change take place? In the rest of the book Arendt has concentration camps on her mind, while in the last chapter she focuses on the ideology of Bolsheviks. She does not try to show that Gulag and Aushwitz are equally evil, but that Nazi and Bolshevik ideologies are, formally speaking, the same. Aren't all ideologies, formally speaking, the same? What is special about totalitarian ideologies? Ideology is fundamental to totalitarianism, because it is the standpoint from which the world is criticized. Terror which functions in the name of ideology, "seeks to 'stabilize' men in order to liberate the forces of nature or history." Ideology understood in this way is not an element of totalitarianism, but a common origin *par excellence*. Terror becomes lawfulness, a way to establish the rule of justice on Earth. In Arendt's understanding of totalitarian ideology Darwin is a link between Nazis and Bolsheviks. "Underlying the Nazis' belief in race laws as the expression of the law of nature in man, is Darwin's idea of man as the product of a natural development which does not necessarily stop with the present species of human beings, just as under the Bolsheviks' belief in class-struggle as the expression of the law in history lies Marx's notion of society as the product of a gigantic historical movement which races according to its own law of motion to the end of historical times when it will abolish itself ...

Engels could not think of a greater compliment to Marx's scholarly achievements than to call him the "Darwin of history."

If one considers, not the actual achievement, but the basic philosophies of both man, it turns out that ultimately the movement of history and the movement of nature are one and the same...The 'natural' law of the survival of the fittest is just as much a historical law and could be used as much by racism as Marx's law of the survival of the most progressive class."¹¹ Is Arendt's naturalization of Marx correct? If it is she can say that there is a theoretical continuity between Marx's thought and Stalinism and that Marxism is an intellectual origin of totalitarianism. I will not comment on Arendt's understanding now. First I will briefly present a few ideas from the first part of Marcuse's book *Soviet Marxism*, and then compare Marcuse's and Arendt's theoretical solutions.

Marcuse wants to show the relationship between Marx's philosophy and Lenin's interpretation of Marx, and the relationship between Leninism and Stalinism. The question is - Is Marx's thought an essential, central part of Soviet Marxism? Soviet Marxism is Soviet ideology and if Marx has a fundamental role in Soviet Marxism then Arendt's understanding is correct.

In the introduction Marcuse compares Hegel and Marx. Hegel believed in objective historical laws which were for him the manifestation of Reason. History was for Hegel at the same time logical and teleological process, and it was progress in the consciousness and the realization of freedom.

For Marx history progresses through the development of the productive forces, but that progress is not the realization of Freedom, but the creation of the 'prerequisites' of Freedom. For Marx, points out Marcuse, history is not the manifestation of reason but the opposite. "What is history to Hegel is still prehistory to Marx."¹² It is possible to talk about historical laws in Marx's philosophy, but the laws are separated from teleology. Historical changes from one social system to another happen when the development of productivity and changes in the basic division of labor cause the transformation of the old political and cultural institutions. The new society is born within the framework of the old. In Marx's theory there is no metaphysical Reason underlying the process and no *telos* toward which history is moving. The historical development proceeds through the action of men, who are the historical agent. How does Marx see the transition from capitalism to socialism? Is there going to be a revolution, and who is going to be the subject of the revolution? Marcuse makes a very important point here, he stresses that the subject of socialist revolution is the industrial proletariat. "The revolution was to be the direct organized

¹¹Arendt, op.cit., p. 463.

¹²Herbert Marcuse, *Soviet Marxism*, Columbia University Press, New York, 1969, p. 2.

action of the proletariat as a class - or it was not at all. Marx and Engels did not recognize any other agent of the revolution nor any 'substitute' for it, for substitution would signify the immaturity of the class as such."¹³

Why is this so important for Marcuse? Because he believes that the essential difference between Marx and Soviet Marxism arises from the change of the revolutionary subject (agent). Lenin's revolution did not happen within the framework of highly developed capitalism, and the role of the industrial proletariat was changed. The subject of the revolution was revolutionary avant-garde; the class consciousness was brought upon the proletariat from without and the proletariat was transformed from the subject to an object of the revolutionary process. The Bolshevik party was the subject of the revolution because it knew the interest of working class better than the class itself. The party knew the Truth, it was the incarnation of the Truth. Lenin turned Marx up side down, and he was forced to do so because the revolution should not have happened in a pre-capitalist country. There is an obvious theoretical break between Marx and Lenin, what about the relationship between Lenin and Stalin. "In view of the constancy of the main elements of Soviet Marxism, the question must be asked whether there is a 'break' between Leninism and Stalinism. The difference between the first years off the Bolshevik

Revolution and the fully developed Stalinist state is obvious; they readily appear as the steady growth of totalitarianism and authoritarian centralization ...But if the dialectical law of the turn from quantity into quality was ever applicable, it was in the transition from Leninism ...to Stalinism."¹⁴ Marcuse recognizes a connection and a continuity between Lenin and Stalin, but at the same time clearly sees the new quality of Stalinism. Obviously Marcuse's and Arendt's understanding of the problem is quite different. Marcuse does not believe that Marx thought that the movement of nature and the movement of history were teleological and one and the same. Unlike Arendt he sees the break between Marx and Lenin and the continuity between Lenin and Stalin. His analysis shows us the problem of Arendt's methodological approach in the last chapter. If the law of nature and the law of history are one and the same and if the law of nature(history) is identified with the law of movement (if the Bolshevik/Nazi party knows the Truth) and if terror is the execution of law of movement, then the massacre of anarchists in Kronstat and the extermination of the Jews in the concentration camps are, formally speaking, the same. In both cases the victims were killed in the name of historical(natural) truth, and in the name of the movement. From the position of totalitarian ideology both crimes were rational and utilitarian. That is a problem for Arendt because one of the most interesting distinctions in the rest of the

¹³Marcuse, op.cit., p. 26.

¹⁴Marcuse, op.cit., p. 74.

book is the distinction between the one-party dictatorship of Lenin and the totalitarian regime of Stalin (the distinction between Nazi regime before 1938 and after 1938). This distinction no longer works. Arendt tried to reconcile two different methodological approaches, but unfortunately that was impossible.

However, the logic of Arendt's original narrative in which totalitarianism(Nazism) is understood as a specific historical 'constellation' of elements, as the crystallization in which Hell appeared on Earth is still impressive. 'Systems', regimes are totalitarian when they generate evil, their structure is less important. Arendt did not compare political institutions and the economy of Nazi Germany and Stalin's Soviet Union, she was not trying to prove that their political systems function in the same way (which is the liberal approach). Her book is therefore ideologically useless. Lenin, Stalin and Krushev lived in a same kind of system, but only Stalin's Soviet Union was totalitarian. If we stay on the level of the analysis of the institutions it is impossible to see what happened, because Stalin did not change Lenin's institutions and Krushev did not change Stalin's institutions either (in the same way the political and economical system was not changed in Germany after 1938). Hannah Arendt knows the answer, but we can know whether a regime is totalitarian or not only a posteriori. Arendt's solution can not be understood as the cold war thinking because her fundamental position is that totalitarianism is an radically evil answer to problems which were created by the nation-state, and especially by the lack of genuine politics in that kind of state. She was not disgusted only with totalitarianism, and nowadays when Europe for the second time allowed the appearance of radical evil, it is not difficult to see why. "Totalitarian solutions may well survive the fall of totalitarian regimes in the form of strong temptations which will come up whenever it seems impossible to alleviate political, social or economic misery in a manner worthy of man."¹⁵

¹⁵Arendt, op.cit., p. 459.